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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO RUEHIA/USICA WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0190
INFO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4824
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE 5948
RUQMKM/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM IMMEDIATE 0460
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE 7195
RUQMBE/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE 9783
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE 5613
RUQMOD/AMEMBASSY DOHA IMMEDIATE 0482
RUQMAM/AMEMBASSY MANAMA IMMEDIATE 0570
RUEHJI/AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE 4158
RUQMKW/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE 2646
RUQMMT/AMEMBASSY MUSCAT IMMEDIATE 0589
RUQMYA/USLO RIYADH IMMEDIATE 0562
RUQMBI/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI IMMEDIATE 0918
BT
UNCLAS DAMASCUS 00400

USICA

USICA FOR VOA/PN: PGM/PPN: NEA

E.O. 12065: N/A

SUBJ: DAMASCUS DEPARTURE STATEMENT OF SENATOR
CHARLES H. PERCY

1. THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT WAS DELIVERED BY SENATOR
CHARLES H. PERCY UPON DEPARTURE FROM DAMASCUS
JANUARY 19.

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2. I AM MOST PLEASED WITH MY VISIT TO SYRIA, WHICH WAS HIGHLY USEFUL. I HAVE BEEN CORDIALLY AND WARMLY RECEIVED BY PRESIDENT ASSAD, FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM AND CHAIRMAN OF THE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, DR. BILLAL. DURING MY EXTENSIVE, IN-DEPTH AND WIDE RANGING SEPARATE DISCUSSIONS WITH PRESIDENT ASSAD AND FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM TODAY, EXACTLY SEVEN YEARS TO THE DAY AFTER OUR LAST MEETING IN DAMASCUS, WE HAD A FRANK EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND ESPECIALLY ON THE PEACE PROCESS. WE ALSO DISCUSSED UNITED STATES-SYRIAN BILATERAL RELATIONS. I LEAVE SYRIA WITH A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF SYRIA'S CONCERNS AND POLICIES, AND I HOPE THAT I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CONVEY AMERICAN THINKING ON THESE ISSUES, VITAL TO BOTH NATIONS. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE CONTINUE THIS DIALOGUE, WHICH SERVES THE INTERESTS OF US ALL, FOR WE SHARE THE COMMON GOAL OF MIDDLE EAST PEACE, THOUGH WE SOMETIMES DIFFER ON HOW TO REACH THIS OBJECTIVE. WE COMPLETELY AGREE, HOWEVER, THAT EVERY EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO BRING THE TRAGIC IRAN-IRAQ WAR TO AN END, AND I COMMEND SYRIA FOR A SUCCESSFUL EFFORT TO DISCOURAGE BROADENING OF THE SCOPE AND THE AREA OF THE WAR. WE ALSO SHARE THE DESIRE FOR A BETTER LIFE FOR PEOPLE OF THIS AREA AND WE BOTH HAVE, I BELIEVE, SIGNIFICANT ROLES TO PLAY. WE NEED TO WORK TOGETHER AS CLOSELY AS WE CAN. IN THIS REGARD, THE WIDELY DIVERSIFIED AMERICAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OF ROUGHLY DOLS 200 MILLION DEMONSTRATES U.S. WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT IN IMPROVING THE LIFE OF THE SYRIAN PEOPLE. THIS MONEY IS BEING USED FOR DAMASCUS WATER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS; FOR RURAL SCHOOLS, ROADS, WATER SUPPLY AND ELECTRIFICATION; FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ON MAJOR ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS. MORE THAN 500 SYRIANS HAVE BEEN IN THE UNITED STATES OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS ON DEVELOPMENT TRAINING PROGRAMS. RELATEDLY, WE HAVE ACTIVE CULTURAL COOPERATION, WITH AMERICAN STUDENTS AND PROFESSORS IN SYRIAN UNIVERSITIES AND A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF SYRIANS TRAVELING TO THE U.S. I BELIEVE FIRMLY THAT ALL OF THESE ACTIVITIES FOSTER

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THE BETTER UNDERSTANDING AND MUTUAL RESPECT THAT LIE
AT THE HEART OF RELATIONS AMONG PEOPLE.
I COMMEND THE GOVERNMENT OF SYRIA FOR ESTABLISHING
THESE GOALS FOR IMPROVING THE LIFE OF ITS PEOPLE AND
FOR THE INTELLIGENT WAY ITS GOVERNMENT HAS WORKED WITH
AMERICAN TECHNICIANS TO IMPLEMENT THESE OUTSTANDING
PROGRAMS.
AGAIN, I WANT TO EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION FOR MY GRACIOUS
RECEPTION IN SYRIA AND FOR THE MEETINGS I HAVE HAD WITH
ITS LEADERS, AND FOR THE ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO ME BY
THE DISTINGUISHED AMERICAN AMBASSADOR, ROBERT PAGANELLI.
I ALSO WISH TO COMMEND THE FINE PERFORMANCE OF SYRIA'S
AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON, THE DISTINGUISHED AMBASSADOR
RAFIQ JOUEIJATI.
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END OF MESSAGE

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